

https://thetexan.news/state/legislature/89th-session/national-business-group-makes-seven-figure-ad-buy-pushing-tort-reform-in-texas/article_b5178a57-ace5-4752-b51c-81c692c9c371.html

National Business Group Makes Seven-Figure Ad Buy Pushing Tort Reform in Texas

The ad will be run across mediums, including television, throughout the state.

BRAD JOHNSON

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Texas Capitol Dome before sunrise.

(Brad Johnson/ The Texan)



A national business group called Protecting American Consumers Together (PACT) is moving into Texas to push for additional tort reform during the 89th Legislative Session.

PACT — a group financially backed by Uber and Waffle House, among others — is running a campaign ad spanning all media formats with a seven-figure buy behind it to back priority legislation that would restrict financial awards in personal injury lawsuits. The ad is up on digital platforms now and will be up on television in the next week or two.

Senate Bill (SB) 30 by state Sen. Charles Schwertner (R-Georgetown) would set various restrictions on the kinds of evidence that can be submitted in a civil lawsuit, limit what counts under the “mental or emotional pain” or “physical pain and suffering” categories, and require judges to spell out their justification for awards above a certain threshold.

State Rep. Greg Bonnen (R-Friendswood) is carrying the identical version in the House.

The ad states, “We pay a hidden tax in Texas because of lawsuit abuse. Excessive litigation costs every Texas household nearly \$4,600 every year. Texas, it's time for common sense reforms to protect consumers and lower the cost of living for hardworking Texans.”

“PACT is expanding our mission to Texas to stand up for families and protect consumers from skyrocketing costs brought on by excessive litigation,” said PACT Executive Director Lauren Zelt.

“We look forward to working in the state to get these commonsense reforms across the finish line, protect consumers who want to access the legal system with respect, and put money back in the pockets of hardworking Texans.”

Tort reform has a lengthy and heated political history in Texas. In 2003, the Texas Legislature amended the constitution to permit a cap on non-economic damages in lawsuits at a later point — but did not place a specific cap in statute. Business groups,

most notably in-state Texans for Lawsuit Reform, had been pushing for that for more than a decade. They argued, like PACT does here, that “nuclear verdicts” hurt businesses and consumers across the board by uplifting the cost to the rest of the population. The trial lawyers, who were the most powerful lobby group in the state back then, fought it hard and managed to stave off more robust tort reform measures the business community wanted. They remain a powerful force in Texas politics.

This effort follows the recent passage of a similar but not identical law in Georgia, which PACT pushed hard for as well. The group also has an advertising footprint in California.

Brad Johnson is a senior reporter for The Texan and an Ohio native who graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 2017. He is an avid sports fan who most enjoys watching his favorite teams continue their title drought throughout his cognizant lifetime. In his free time, you may find Brad quoting Monty Python productions and trying to calculate the airspeed velocity of an unladen swallow.

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Brad Johnson is a **senior reporter and managing editor** for *The Texan* and an Ohio native who graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 2017. He covers Texas politics along with a focus on fiscal and energy policy. Read Brad's articles.